Admission Policy of St Mary's National School

Garters Lane
Saggart
Co. Dublin

Roll number: 17055T

School Patron: Archbishop of Dublin

1. Introduction

This Admission Policy complies with the requirements of the Education Act 1998, the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 and the Equal Status Act 2000. In drafting this policy, the board of management of the school has consulted with school staff, the school patron and with parents of children attending the school.

The policy was approved by the school patron on 12th August 2020. It is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy, on request, to any person who requests it.

The relevant dates and timelines for St Mary's NS admission process are set out in the school's annual admission notice which is published annually on the school's website at least one week before the commencement of the admission process for the school year concerned.

This policy must be read in conjunction with the annual admission notice for the school year concerned.

The application form for admission is published on the school's website and will be made available in hardcopy on request to any person who requests it.

2. Characteristic spirit and general objectives of the school

St Mary's National School is a Catholic co-educational primary school with a Catholic ethos under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

"Catholic Ethos" in the context of a Catholic primary school means the ethos and characteristic spirit of the Roman Catholic Church, which aims at promoting:
(a) the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil, including the intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual aspects; and
(b) a living relationship with God and with other people; and
(c) a philosophy of life inspired by belief in God and in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus; and
(d) the formation of the pupils in the Catholic faith,

and which school provides religious education for the pupils in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church, and/or such ethos and/or characteristic spirit as may be determined or interpreted from time to time by the Irish Episcopal Conference.
In accordance with S.15 (2) (b) of the Education Act, 1998 the Board of Management of St Mary's National School shall uphold, and be accountable to the patron for so upholding, the characteristic spirit of the school as determined by the cultural, educational, moral, religious, social, linguistic and spiritual values and traditions which inform and are characteristic of the objectives and conduct of the school.

The school is an integral part of Saggart Parish and in partnership with parents and the Catholic Church seeks to nurture the Catholic faith through religious education preparation for the sacraments and the reflection of Gospel values.
St. Mary's N.S. seeks to be a warm and welcoming place, respectful and accommodating of diversity (including but not limited to race, culture, sexual orientation, religion, gender and ability). We strive to provide an inclusive environment responsive to the needs of all children.

We aim to develop an atmosphere of tolerance, openness, honesty and creativity. All children are nurtured and cherished and encouraged to reach their full potential. It is recognised that they contribute to the wider school community by their uniqueness as individuals.

St. Mary's N.S. seeks to cherish and challenge children in a safe, secure and attractive learning environment. We aim to provide quality learning experiences that are enriching and enjoyable through a broad balanced and relevant curriculum. We strive at all times to provide a peaceful, happy and fun learning environment.

St. Mary's N.S. values its open and welcoming relationship with parents. We will continue to work in partnership with parents to ensure the welfare of each individual child and the school as a whole.

3. Admission Statement

St Mary's National School **will not discriminate** in its admission of a student to the school on any of the following:

(a) the gender ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(b) the civil status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(c) the family status ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(d) the sexual orientation ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(e) the religion ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(f) the disability ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(g) the ground of race of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned,
(h) the Traveller community ground of the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned, or
(i) the ground that the student or the applicant in respect of the student concerned has special educational needs

As per section 61 (3) of the Education Act 1998, 'civil status ground', 'disability ground', 'discriminate', 'family status ground', 'gender ground', 'ground of race', 'religion ground', 'sexual

orientation ground' and 'Traveller community ground' shall be construed in accordance with section 3 of the Equal Status Act 2000.

St Mary's National School is a school whose objective is to provide education in an environment which promotes certain religious values and does not discriminate where it refuses to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic and it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

St Mary's National School is a school which has established classes, with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, which provides an education exclusively for students with a category or categories of special educational needs (ASD) specified by the Minister and may refuse to admit to the class a student who does not have the category of needs specified.

4. Categories of Special Educational Needs catered for in the school/special class

St Mary's National School with the approval of the Minister for Education and Skills, has established four classes to provide an education exclusively for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

5. Admission of Students

This school shall admit each student seeking admission except where –

a) the school is oversubscribed (please see section 6 below for further details)

b) a parent of a student, when required by the Principal in accordance with section 23(4) of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student

St Mary's National School is a Catholic school and may refuse to admit as a student a person who is not Catholic where it is proved that the refusal is essential to maintain the ethos of the school.

The special class in St Mary's National School provides an education exclusively for students with ASD and the school may refuse admission to this class, where the student concerned does not have the specified category of special educational needs provided for in this class.

6. Oversubscription

In the event that the school is oversubscribed, the school will, when deciding on applications for admission, apply the following selection criteria in the order listed below to those applications that are received within the timeline for receipt of applications as set out in the school's annual admission notice:

Selection criteria for mainstream classes

- **Priority 1 – Siblings/stepsiblings of children enrolled in the school and children resident in the Parish of Saggart and Children of staff**
- **Priority 2 – Children residing outside the Parish of Saggart**

Selection criteria for ASD preschool*

- **Priority 1 – Siblings/stepsiblings of children enrolled in the school**
- **Priority 2 – Children resident in the Parish of Saggart**
- **Priority 3 – Children residing outside the Parish of Saggart**

Selection criteria for ASD classes*

- **Priority 1 – Children enrolled in the ASD early intervention class – This priority will be further divided into the following sub groups -**
  - **Priority 1A – Children with siblings/step-siblings**
  - **Priority 1B – Children resident in the parish**
  - **Priority 1C – Children residing outside the Parish of Saggart**
- **Priority 2 – Children currently enrolled in the mainstream classes**
- **Priority 3 – Siblings/stepsiblings of children enrolled in the school**
- **Priority 4 – Children resident in the Parish of Saggart**
- **Priority 5 – Children residing outside of the Parish of Saggart**

***School must be furnished with professional reports including a diagnosis of ASD and a recommendation for special class setting for applications to special classes as per NCSE requirements.**

In the event that there are two or more students tied for a place or places in any of the selection criteria categories above (the number of applicants exceeds the number of remaining places), the following arrangements will apply:

- **Each priority area will be ordered by age, where the eldest child is offered a place first, *with the exception of Selection criteria for ASD Preschool Priority 3 and Selection criteria for ASD classes which will be prioritized by proximityto the school.***

7. What will not be considered or taken into account

In accordance with section 62(7)(e) of the Education Act, the school will not consider or take into account any of the following in deciding on applications for admission or when placing a student on a waiting list for admission to the school:

(a) a student's prior attendance at a pre-school or pre-school service, including naíonraí, other than in relation to a student's prior attendance at an early intervention class
(b) the payment of fees or contributions (howsoever described) to the school;
(c) a student's academic ability, skills or aptitude;
other than in relation to:
-admission to the special class insofar as it is necessary in order to ascertain whether or not the student has the category of special educational needs (ASD) concerned)
(d) the occupation, financial status, academic ability, skills or aptitude of a student's parents;
(e) a requirement that a student, or his or her parents, attend an interview, open day or other meeting as a condition of admission;
(f) a student's connection to the school by virtue of a member of his or her family attending or having previously attended the school;
(other than Priority 1 criteria based on siblings of a student attending)
(g) the date and time on which an application for admission was received by the school,

This is subject to the application being received at any time during the period specified for receiving applications set out in the annual admission notice of the school for the school year concerned.

8. Decisions on applications

All decisions on applications for admission to St Mary's National School will be based on the following:

- Our school's admission policy
- The school's annual admission notice (where applicable)
- The information provided by the applicant in the school's official application form received during the period specified in our annual admission notice for receiving applications

  (Please see section 14 below in relation to applications received outside of the admissions period and section 15 below in relation to applications for places in years other than the intake group.)

Selection criteria that are not included in our school admission policy will not be used to make a decision on an application for a place in our school.

9. Notifying applicants of decisions

Applicants will be informed in writing as to the decision of the school, within the timeline outlined in the annual admissions notice.

If a student is not offered a place in our school, the reasons why they were not offered a place will be communicated in writing to the applicant, including, where applicable, details of the student's ranking against the selection criteria and details of the student's place on the waiting list for the school year concerned.

Applicants will be informed of the right to seek a review/right of appeal of the school's decision (see section 18 below for further details).

10. Acceptance of an offer of a place by an applicant

In accepting an offer of admission from St Mary's National School, you must indicate—
(i) whether or not you have accepted an offer of admission for another school or schools. If you have accepted such an offer, you must also provide details of the offer or offers concerned and

(ii) whether or not you have applied for and awaiting confirmation of an offer of admission from another school or schools, and if so, you must provide details of the other school or schools concerned.

11. Circumstances in which offers may not be made or may be withdrawn

An offer of admission may not be made or may be withdrawn by St Mary's National School where—

(i) it is established that information contained in the application is false or misleading.
(ii) an applicant fails to confirm acceptance of an offer of admission on or before the date set out in the annual admission notice of the school.
(iii) the parent of a student, when required by the principal in accordance with section 23(4) of

the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, fails to confirm in writing that the code of behaviour of the school is acceptable to him or her and that he or she shall make all reasonable efforts to ensure compliance with such code by the student; or

(iv) an applicant has failed to comply with the requirements of 'acceptance of an offer' as set out in section 10 above.

12. Sharing of Data with other schools

Applicants should be aware that section 66(6) of the Education (Admission to Schools) Act 2018 allows for the sharing of certain information between schools in order to facilitate the efficient admission of students.

13. Waiting list in the event of oversubscription

In the event of there being more applications to the school year concerned than places available, a waiting list of students whose applications for admission to St Mary's National School were unsuccessful due to the school being oversubscribed will be compiled and will remain valid for the school year in which admission is being sought.

Placement on the waiting list of St Mary's National School is in the order of priority assigned to the students' applications after the school has applied the selection criteria in accordance with this admission policy.

Offers of any subsequent places that become available for and during the school year in relation to which admission is being sought will be made to those students on the waiting list, in accordance with the order of priority in relation to which the students have been placed on the list.

14. Late Applications

All applications for admission received after the closing date as outlined in the annual admission notice will be considered and decided upon in accordance with our school's admissions policy, the Education Admissions to School Act 2018 and any regulations made under that Act.
Late applications will be prioritised using Priority 1 and 2 as outlined above, and then by age.

15. Procedures for admission of students to other years and during the school year (Junior Infants – 6th Class)

The Term 'Transfer Application' refers to applications for enrolment into a specific class made on behalf of a pupil currently enrolled and registered in a class in another primary school. Effectively, the pupil is applying to transfer from one school to our school.

1. Parent/Guardians must complete an 'Application To Enrol Form' and submit this to the school with the requested documentation.

2. The fully completed Application may be submitted personally or via post/email.

3. Upon receipt of the application, parents/guardians will receive a 'Confirmation of Receipt of Enrolment Application Slip' to acknowledge that we have received the application.

- **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to notify the school of any change to their contact details and that of any other details contained in the 'Application to Enrol Form'.**

- **It is the responsibility of the Parent/Guardian to ensure the documentation requested for submission with the 'Application to Enrol Form' is supplied with the application.**

Applications must be fully completed and accompanied by a copy of;

- Birth Certificate/Adoption Certificate,
- Proof of Address in at least one of the parent's/guardian's name must be provided from one of the following sources; ***Electricity Bill, Gas Bill, Correspondence from a Government Department or Office of the Revenue Commissioners***

Applicants may also be asked to provide official postcode identification in their name. Applicants are reminded that the burden of proof rests with the applicant to satisfy the Board of Management that they are primarily resident at the address stated on the application. The Board of Management reserves the right to verify to its satisfaction any information submitted. False or misleading relevant information on an application form will deem the application invalid.
The Board of Management may also request additional documentation to verify any matter pertaining to the application.

- **Failure to supply authentic and genuine items of documentation requested for submission will deem the application invalid and the application will be refused.**

4. The Application will be categorised by Priority and in the event that applications for enrolment exceeds or is expected to exceed the number of places available, the Board of Management will, when a vacancy arises, apply the prioritised criteria as outlined.

5. A 'Transfer Application' To Enrol into Junior Infants – 6th Class will normally be processed at the earliest opportunity but will receive a response within 28 days. Applications made during school holidays will not be processed until the school re-opens.

Where the number of applicants exceeds the places available in the school in each of the priority areas applicants will be prioritised by date of application.

16. Declaration in relation to the non-charging of fees

This rule applies to all schools.

The board of St Mary's National School or any persons acting on its behalf will not charge fees for or seek payment or contributions (howsoever described) as a condition of-

(a) an application for admission of a student to the school, or
(b) the admission or continued enrolment of a student in the school.

17. Arrangements regarding students not attending religious instruction

The following are the school's arrangements for students, where the parents have requested that the student attend the school without attending religious instruction in the school. These arrangements will not result in a reduction in the school day of such students:

A written request should be made to the Principal of the school. A meeting will then be arranged with the parent to discuss how the request may be accommodated by the school.

18. Reviews/appeals

Review of decisions by the board of Management

The parent of the student may request the board to review a decision to refuse admission. Such requests must be made in accordance with Section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

The timeline within which such a review must be requested and the other requirements applicable to such reviews are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

The board will conduct such reviews in accordance with the requirements of the procedures determined under Section 29B and with section 29C of the Education Act 1998.

Note: Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. This can be done by writing a letter addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, and sent to principal@saggartns.ie (as secretary to the BOM). It must be done within 21 days of the date if the school's decision to refuse admission.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the board of management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. This can be done by writing a letter addressed to the Chairperson of the Board of Management, and sent to principal@saggartns.ie (as secretary to the BOM). It must be done within 21 days of the date if the school's decision to refuse admission.

Right of appeal

Under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998, the parent of the student may appeal a decision of this school to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(i) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due to the school being oversubscribed. This must be done within 21 days of the date if the school's decision to refuse admission.

An appeal may be made under Section 29 (1)(c)(ii) of the Education Act 1998 where the refusal to admit was due a reason other than the school being oversubscribed. This must be done within 21 days of the date if the school's decision to refuse admission.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **must request a review** of that decision by the board of management **prior to making an appeal** under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management). This must be done within 21 days of the date if the school's decision to refuse admission.

Where an applicant has been refused admission due to a reason other than the school being oversubscribed, the applicant **may request a review** of that decision by the Board of Management prior to making an appeal under section 29 of the Education Act 1998. (see Review of decisions by the Board of Management). This must be done within 21 days of the date if the school's decision to refuse admission.

Appeals under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 will be considered and determined by an independent appeals committee appointed by the Minister for Education and Skills.

The timeline within which such an appeal must be made and the other requirements applicable to such appeals are set out in the procedures determined by the Minister under section 29B of the Education Act 1998 which are published on the website of the Department of Education and Skills.

Signed

Miriam Marron

Miriam Marron

Chairperson

Suzanne Olwill

Suzanne Olwill

Principal